

WARE. (J. F. W.)

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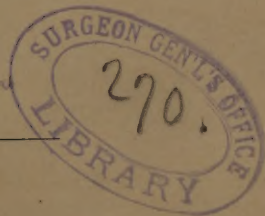
THE

HOME TO THE CAMP:

ADDRESSED

To the Soldiers of the Union.

By J. F. W. WARE. ✓



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THE HOME TO THE CAMP,

GREETING:

SOLDIERS, FRIENDS, BROTHERS! —

A LITTLE while ago you were here with us and of us,—husbands, fathers, brothers. We knew you as our daily companions. To your strong love we looked, in your strong arm we trusted. Others knew you as merchants, mechanics, manufacturers; we knew you as the central figures of our homes,—our pride, our solace, our support. To-day we miss you. We gather at our meals, or around the evening table, and your place is vacant. In a thousand ways we feel that you are gone, and the world outside—its places of traffic, its circles of friendship, its houses of prayer—mourns an absence which subtracts as much from its pleasure as its power. There are great gaps in our hearts and our homes, which cannot be closed because of you. It is not like the void death makes. The old places are kept open and warm for you. You are only absent, and we wait and watch; daily and nightly we pray for you,—for your safety and your good, and your speedy coming to us again.

Your absence is peculiar. You have torn yourselves from endearments, from prosperities, from plans, and have put in peril property, comfort, life, and health, for no personal or selfish end. The great mother who bore and nurtured us in her sore sorrow has cried for help, and you have answered to the cry and are sworn to rescue. Others may have failed to understand your self-devotion, but your homes have not,—your God has not.

If your absence is peculiar, so is our memory of you. In your knapsacks, in secret pockets, about your person, you have all some cherished token of thoughtful affection. The cry of "*Mail*" in the camp brings the weary to their feet, and makes the whole man aglow with a longing hope, and the dear and tender words that swim before your eyes waken memories, not to subdue, but to make still nobler your resolve. And beside—as never into camp before—there comes from time to time, breaking the monotony of army rations, something that the good mother, the dear wife, the gentle sister, remembers was your special fancy, which their own hands have made and their own thought sent, while their hearts were full at thinking how it would put you in mind of home. But we have now other things than these for you, and though they may seem only to be words, yet to words, having the savor of love and faith, even the salvation of man has been intrusted. Will you take kindly of us what we give in honesty and hope?

A few weeks ago we were all aghast at what some still allow themselves to call a disaster. You had gone but too gayly to a field for which you were not prepared, and had returned apparently defeated. That dark day to our cause has proved what the day of crucifixion did to the truth. Out from the dark night God calls the bliss and beauty and success of day. We now know that never had people cause more devoutly to thank God than for just that result. It was the first step to victory. It revealed the inherent, fatal defects in our organization, — not so much the ignorance as the incapacity of leaders, the want and the necessity of discipline among the men. We shuddered at the reverse; now we shudder to think what would have been our future but for the reverse. It has thrown us back upon principles we had forgotten or despised, but which still are the only hope of sure success. Now it is seen that an army in the field needs not so much the *prestige of a name* as the *presence of a man*; that age and wisdom are reverend and trusty, but that youth and fire are alone electric. And yet had Scott been in the saddle, or had the “coming man” been there, victory had not been so well for us as the purifying of so mortifying failure, which shows us where lies our weakness, and gives you time to gird your loins anew, so that hereafter you shall quit yourselves like men.

The real work now begins. You are weaned

from your homes, you are used to camp fare and life. You are soldiers, and something of the rights, privileges, as well as position, of the citizen must be for the time yielded.

Here comes your first trial. To volunteer under excitement, from the pressure of necessity or a sense of duty, is one thing, — an easy thing; but to find that in so doing you are obliged for a time to surrender certain rights and privileges which every American comes to consider as a part of his liberty, to find that you, who have scarcely submitted to any self-government, *must* come under the government of men, sometimes your inferiors, — this is no mean trial. But remember it is not the *men* whom you come under, not the *men* whom you must obey, but *the laws, the restrictions of a service of which these men are the servants.* At most they apply to you the law found by long experiment best adapted to carry out the purpose desired. It is not their whim, their will, which stands in before your old liberty, but *law*, which for the time being, for the good, for the safety of all, must be imperative. Your young commander and his veteran chief themselves serve and yield implicitly to that law.

And now you will find the mistake we have all made in insisting so much upon individual, personal liberty. We have educated ourselves into the idea that we are "as good as anybody." We will call no man master, but think, speak, do just as we

please. The results of all this are disastrous enough in ordinary life. At this critical moment, they fill our armies with men who have to learn to obey. We know how hard this will be, yet we have confidence that you will set yourselves earnestly about the disagreeable duty. There can be no order, there can be no safety, there can be no victory, without obedience. Sink for the time your boasted independence — a prime ingredient in manhood, we all feel, when rightly managed — and content yourselves with the humble position of the instrument, which may not question, hesitate, or refuse, but must do what the hand puts it to. War, unnatural in its existence and all its deeds, compels the yielding of many things fundamental to success in peace. Not only must some laws be silent, but certain dear privileges and rights stand aside and wait. The insubordination of individuals and of bodies has disgusted and alarmed us. We have felt it as a personal thing. It disgraces you with us. It tells against the cause. We feel, however, that they were things of the green tree, and are confident that, when used to the new necessity, you will see how brave it is to submit. You who have sacrificed so much will not stop here. The first sharp curtailing of an almost lawless liberty, the first unpleasant conviction that you cannot longer follow your own will, must indeed be hard. But, you know, the Apostle says that a “*good* soldier

endures hardness." He spoke of the Roman soldier, fighting in a cause in which he had no personal stake, in which he was simply carrying out the will of some imperial Cæsar. You are fighting in your own cause. Not a man among you but has his all at stake. Shall the coward thought of hardness creep as a paralysis upon your loyalty? Grumbings, complainings, unreasonableness, are camp-followers, powerless for good, but mighty for evil, which each one of you owes it to his manhood to rise against and utterly expel. They are traitors and rebels, a thousand-fold more dangerous than those who wear the garb and are arrayed beneath the banner of the foe. Not the mere *sentiment of loyalty to the flag* does your country now demand; but, under every circumstance, *obedience*,—and be sure that we at home appreciate your position and will applaud the sacrifice.

That there have been annoyances, grievances, over and above the hardships inseparable from your condition, we feel as keenly as you. But it was not possible to create an army perfect in all its details at the moment of demand. Self-seeking, inefficient, cowardly men thrust themselves before their betters into places of command or trust, and you have suffered, shamefully suffered. We feel that, and our rulers feel it. As fast as is possible these men are being removed and the evil they have done remedied. As a general thing you have

nobly borne all, and we whose sympathies are quick and keen are now rejoicing at the changed tone of the letters we have from you. As your new yoke settles to its place, you find it easier than you had supposed. You are getting wonted, accepting the hardship that is inevitable, confident that what can be done will be done for you. In this you are only just. You form an army gone out from the sympathy and affection of homes, — not aliens to us, not our hirelings, but bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, — and think you we will intermit our thought and effort for you until every possible good shall be secured? *You are our charge.* Our rulers are but our servants; if they falter, if they fail, if they are false toward you, *we* stand behind, and you shall feel that our warm love can reach and hold you still. And we feel sure that, though there will continue to be exceptions, you will find the officers whom the government allows in authority over you will be men not only well up in the drill, and true in the hour of danger, but men considerate of you. Would to God that we could hope that they might all lead in other things as in the battle!

And do not think the sacrifice wholly on your part. We at home have our hardness to endure. It may seem as if he who stood against battery and bayonet, and was familiar with the exposures of camp and march and bivouac and night and storm, had the sacrifices to himself. The home has its

sacrifices too,—its joint offering to the cause, differing rather in the kind than in the amount of the cost. The selfish, mean man will take care that he gives up nothing to the general good; but the recording angel marks down, daily, noble deeds in humble homes, which, though they shall find no place of mention in the war-bulletins, shall stand graved indelibly upon the book of life. And these homes stand ready to do yet more; and if the stern hour shall come, there are those here — men of every rank and every age, whom other duties now hold back,—who will be with you, arm to arm, heart to heart, to fill with you, if it must be, the last ditch over which the trampers upon the rights of man shall march to their accursed victory. But we trust, as in a sure prophecy, in the thrilling words of your young commander: “We have had our last retreat; we have seen our last defeat. Henceforth victory will crown our efforts.”

We will not conceal from you that there are many among us who are apprehensive of the effect of camp-life upon your moral character and your after usefulness. Some very foolishly think that you will come back only to curse us, while there are others of us who believe that you may come back better men than you went away. From other wars men have returned to be a burden and a curse; such men will return from this; but the large majority of you we *expect* will be wiser

and better for this experience,—truer to home, truer to the world and to God. There is every reason why it should be so. The temptations, great, new, peculiar, and terrible, that are about you are not invincible ; and it is a libel on the word *soldier* to make it the synonyme of depravity. The regular soldier, divorced for years from the sympathies of home, the interests of civil life, fighting his trade, with long and terrible intervals of idleness, without resource, may become — we should almost say must become—the easy prey of vices which lurk in other places as well as camps. But you are not regular soldiers ; this is not your trade. You have resource. You are no hirelings ; but you strike for home, and the home you would defend in turn would help to shield you from that which has power to cast the soul into hell. Undoubtedly, many of you understand your own peril. Let us show you such as seem to us to come from your isolation from other influences, your association among yourselves, and the character of your occupation.

Ever since Christianity has disenthralled woman and lifted her to her place as at least man's equal, it has been found that communities from which woman is excluded are exposed to special moral depravity. There is a controlling influence in her presence of which we are as little conscious as of the controlling influence of the laws of gravity. Where she is absent, man soon loses ground as a

moral being. California was redeemed from the terrible vices and crimes which once gave it bad pre-eminence, more by the advent of woman than by the ministration of law; and history is full of the evil of the monkish system. Woman can have no place in the camp. She may be the ready angel of the hospital "when pain and anguish wring the brow," she cannot be counsel and comforter when temptations and worries come. If you see her about the camp at all it is *mostly* as she is degraded, ruined,—the foulest ruin in the bright universe of God. You must take your stand without her,—without that which at home is so much your safeguard,—and single-handed face the wily foe. If you will watch yourselves wisely; if you will let dear home memories and tender home words have their way upon you; if you will never let thought or word or deed sin against her purity,—this very season of separation and peril may turn to your best good. Absent, she may have a better power than when present, and you may come back to her more justly to appreciate her fidelity and love. You know what men are apt to say of women when they get together, and we know how the demon of lust may be waked in the battle-hour. Watch well the first, and if dark temptation to the last shall come, may spirit of mother or wife or sister—a still voice from home—save your victim and save your soul!

As you have gone from us, the bearing of the many has been all that we could ask, — cheerful, sober, resolved. But it was painful to see that others could go away to such a duty in reckless or stupid intoxication, and we know that much of the trouble and shame we have had to meet have come of this. No step taken by your officers has been more cordially approved at home than the closing of drinking-places, and individual effort by precept and example to induce the men to abandon the evil thing has been fully appreciated here. With a thrill of joy we read that, when in the city of New York some gentlemen remonstrated with the commander of a Massachusetts regiment for dismissing his men for some hours to the fascinations of the metropolis, the confident reply was, "*My men will every one of them be back, and every one of them be sober.*" That man commanded *soldiers*, — men of self-respect and self-control; that man may lead his command anywhere, and trust them to the death. Why shall not every commander have the same trust? The man who drinks doubles his exposure to every form of casualty. Cold, heat, wounds, exposure, disease, lay terrible hands on him; body and brain become decrepit, duty and life a burden, while shame is brought upon your calling, upon your comrades, upon your homes. We ask you to save yourselves and us; to remember that by intoxication you disgrace your manhood, you disgrace your calling, you disgrace the cause.

That other great camp peril,—gambling,—which we see already has commenced its insidious work, we shall hope to keep in check by providing other and healthy amusements for leisure hours. Books, even religious books, are not all you want. There are intervals between hard work or great excitement when one cannot read, nor yet be idle, when an evil thing is chosen because the good is absent. The army should be furnished amply with the means of healthy amusement, just as important to you as to Dr. Kane's sailors in the Arctic Sea.

Government has shown its interest in you by sending you equipped and attended as no army before. It not merely provides you sufficient clothing, but with more than you can eat. The surplus may be exchanged for luxuries or commuted into cash. Of its own will it has raised the soldier's wages. Liberal beyond all precedent to you, no real want that it has not provided for, it leaves you the opportunity, it furnishes you with the incentive to frugality, it is busy with means to help you secure your pay to those who need it at home. Second such care by your own prudence. Allow yourselves in no foolish or wicked expense, but show home how you still prize it by the fulness of your remittance.

Perhaps the crowning work of the government in your behalf is the creation of a Sanitary Committee, which, as an angel of life, seems hovering over a field

so long abandoned to the angel of death. Disease, not the bullet or the sword, decimates armies, — the foe unseen rather than the foe seen, — and yet it may be outmanœuvred, baffled, as surely as the squadron in the field. Only it wants knowledge and action. A few simple laws exactly obeyed, and your camp is as free from malaria and contagion as your home. In every way, what can be done for the alleviation of the necessary evils of your position, government has amply, wisely, tenderly done. And it has not limited itself to the care of the body. Faithful chaplains — men known to us, mostly, as valuable and successful in their vocation — have been appointed to go with you, to warn, instruct, encourage, and soothe ; not to stand aloof as preachers, but to be with you in every scene, your daily companions, — not to take from you any necessity of personal piety, but to show to you, standing in hourly peril, — you, who may be so near to death, — the necessity as well as the propriety of making, *yourselves*, your calling and election sure. Your Bibles go with you to the battle, in more sense than one, your shield in peril. In vain shall the Sanitary Committee tell you how to escape disease, unless you shall do as they say ; in vain shall these others show you how to escape sin, unless you choose to do as they show. The real work remains with you. They offer the means, the success must come from you.

Soldiers and Friends ! We feel that you repre-

sent us in this great struggle. It is the very existence of Liberty which is in peril. If you fail, then Liberty is dead. It is no meaner thing than this that hangs on the fate of the battle. We want you every way to be worthy the grand labor to which you have been called. Napoleon, master of every position as he was, could touch his soldiers by a word as by a deed. No saying of his is more applauded than that by which he roused his veterans at the battle of the Pyramids: "Soldiers! from yonder heights forty centuries are looking down upon you." We can say that, though no dead centuries of the past may look down upon you, yet, as living centuries of the future pass onward, they shall look back at this as the crisis-hour of their own fate, at you as the heroes of the world's best strife. Your devotion shall work all time's redemption. We are wont to look backward for our heroes, and to place the golden days behind. *To-day is the golden time ; this the heroic age !* It is great to live to-day. To be tried in this furnace is honor and privilege. To be one in the serried ranks that close in this last death-grapple with tyranny, — that is to feel indeed the glory of manhood ! Do not — no, not a single man of you — by any act sully the fair hope that springs before a world. The war that our fathers waged, with a just reverence, we have always held as first and holiest ; but to-day yours is a holier task. Alone of all nations, ours stands upon a principle.

For that our fathers struggled, fought, died. They strove to plant the seed, we strive to protect the tree; they dropped the acorn, but to-day tests the vigor of the young oak, and if beneath its shadow all nations are to be blest and its leaves to be their healing, you must stand true to the cause and true to your manhood. To you has come the graver peril which some of them foresaw. Nobly they did their part; as nobly do your mightier task, and transmit your heritage untarnished to the ages, no scandal resting on your names. Washington has said: "Our profession is the chastest of all; even the shadow of a fault tarnishes the lustre of our finest achievements." The Chevalier Bayard, who has come down to us the type of what a soldier should be, was not only "without fear," but "*without reproach*." With insidious industry, and only too great success, the leaders of the foe have spread it among their people that you are a band of ruffians, such as the world has never seen, — burning, plundering, ravishing, murdering, — that your watchword is "*Beauty and booty*." Give the lie to that by the faultless integrity of your whole conduct. You cannot strip war of its horrors. They are inevitable. It must be stern, terrible. But there are mitigations, — not simply courtesies to foes, but tenderness to the defenceless and the weak, respect always to woman. Show your manhood in the fight, nor less at every wayside home; and though necessity com-

pel you to leave behind you desolation, let there not be the wilder waste and havoc of sin. We want to welcome you back, not only with the laurel of victory about your banners, but with the halo of honor around your brows.

Soldiers and Brothers! We greet you as we part! Go to the work that God has appointed you to, to contend, not with man, but with wrong. This war must not be vindictive. It is waged against principles, not against men. Sustain yourselves by no false thought of glory, the mirage that looms to deceive; have no yearning after an imperishable name with men; but do your simple duty, and so win the glory and honor of immortality. It may be sweet and honorable to die for country. But "it is not all of death *to die*." Content yourselves with, make sure of, the approbation of God. Be brave; be pure; fear God. You fight for Him, and in His cause you need not the courage of the brute, but the better courage of the man; not the courage that can march to the deadly, imminent breach, but that courage, you have already found failing you, which rises above power of temptation, thought of man, and dares be true to God.

You are marching on, it may be to defeat, it may be to death;—no, it may be to death, it cannot be to defeat! In such a cause there is no failure. Trust not in the flippant saying that "God is with the heaviest battalions." Take with your arms faith;

as you march, pray; when you fall, trust; when you conquer, give to God the victory. God's cause prospers best when he has righteous helpers. If He be with you, nothing can stand against you. The guilty foe, foiled in every part, compassed by your armies and your fleets, alien from all worthy human sympathy, outcast of God, shall melt away. And then shall be the glorious end. Sweet peace shall come again, and we shall welcome you back to these faithful hearts, not with outward rejoicings alone, which shall be forgotten with the hour, but with that welcome which belongs to warriors triumphant from the last crusade against liberty, law, and love!

